6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

fish-eating ducks made them unpopular for food and the raven was deemed to be inedible. Porcupine and bear brains exercised a debilitating effect on the body and hence were not used in preparing food. In periods of severe hunger the poorer tasting foods and, perhaps, even the magically dangerous animals like mink and otter would be consumed. Under the stress of starvation selectivity broke down to a point where moosehide might be eaten. Although strong repugnance governed the consumption of human flesh,[18] unproductive periods accompanied by severe hunger sometimes led to cannibalism. Tales of confirmed cannibals occur in oral tradition. There is the story of a man widely feared for his perverted appetite, which led him to regard human beings as game. He ate anyone he came across, including his wife and several children. Three sons, however, he spared because they could work for him. Indeed, they specialized in the task of killing men for their cannibal father after the latter grew too old to hunt. Approaching a camp this man would say, "You can kill birds for me now." Then, while the boys went off he started water boiling in readiness for the meat that they would bring back. The tale ends with the old cannibal and his sons meeting death at the hands of an intended victim who possessed exceptionally strong supernatural power.

Edible foods were both prepared for immediate consumption and preserved to be eaten at a later time. Boiling constituted the primary technique of cooking. Some meats, like lynx, were double boiled, the first water being discarded. After the meat had been cooked a "soup" was customarily made, onion greens or animal blood being added to the stock. "Soup took the place of tea in the old days. When people had finished with the meat they always drank the water in which the meat had been cooked." Several methods of boiling were known. Water placed in a basket tightly woven from split spruce roots could be brought to a boil with the aid of hot stones picked from ashes with spruce brush and blown free of dirt. The meat, cut in small pieces, was dropped into the boiling liquid. These vessels sometimes rested on the ground but were also supported a foot or so above the earth on a circle of wooden pegs. Another way of bringing water to boil is reminiscent of the Plains Indians. A pit was dug in the soil and lined with semi-tanned skin or, less commonly, with grass. Hot stones constituted the source of heat and keeping the top of the pit covered with spruce bark helped to retain the steam. Caribou and moose stomachs supplied another variety of container in which food could be cooked. The organ was first carefully warmed in front of the blaze to make it dry and hard. Later it might be suspended over the fire to cook the contents. Vegetables boiled included lily bulbs, muskeg apples, and fern roots, the latter only after being stripped of their outer bark. Dried wild rose petals were "powdered" before cooking. Mashing berries during cooking was common. People sometimes broiled meat by suspending it from a broiling stick or from a bone hook that itself hung from a piece of babiche line. Pieces of fat exposed near the heat of fire provided grease, the drippings being caught in bark containers. "Sometimes, when bear fat was rendered alongside a fire, some of the melted grease was taken and mixed with a little snow. It started to foam up just like ice cream." In summer moose horn could be warmed close to the fire and the "velvet" then scraped off and eaten. Only under exceptional circumstances did the Indians eat raw meat or fat.

[18] See below, p. 91.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River

the beaver men shaped double-tined points for fish spears. The Indians also relied on weirs, while gill nets were set from canoes in summer and under the ice in winter. In the latter season, before a net could be set the ice had to be broken with an ice chisel that was constructed from caribou horn. Dip nets could not be recalled. Angling occurred in summer and winter. Hooks consisted of two splinters of beaver bone crossed and lashed in the form of an x. Fish poisons do not appear to have been known. 226

In addition to the foods already mentioned the Dease River people readily ate brown bear, porcupine, mountain goat, rabbit, ground hog, squirrel, and gopher. Whether nutritionally important or not, the body louse, foetal animals, moose milk, and sheep milk were also consumed. The eyes of the moose and caribou provided delicacies especially reserved for children. Geese, ducks, loons, swans, ptarmigans, spruce hens, and willow grouse found a welcome part in the diet. Fish eggs did not remain neglected. Animals rarely eaten or reserved for periods of scarcity included the grizzly bear, owl, lynx, and whiskey jack. In the category of never eaten animals occurred the fox, muskrat (perhaps the pack rat is indicated?), fisher, otter, mink, wolverine, wolf, dog, frog, eagle, hawk, crow, and woodpecker. Vomiting is said to have followed any attempt to eat otter, mink, wolverine, or wolf. Mud and lily bulbs remained outside of the diet. Although consumption of human flesh rested under strong prohibition, in periods of great hunger cannibalism admittedly took place. An apprehended eater of human flesh might be isolated from his community for as long as two years. Beliefs that cannibalism led to illness or produced a craving for human flesh were denied. No evidence of ceremonial cannibalism could be obtained. 262 266 ●

A large proportion of meat as well as eggs were boiled with the aid of hot stones, in containers of either birch bark or woven spruce root. Caribou and moose stomachs occasionally served as cooking vessels, being hung to one side of the fire. Pit cooking could not be recalled. The water in which meat had been boiled provided a soup, to which onion greens or blood might be added. People prepared animal heads, intestines, and fish on a broiling stick but did not roast food in hot ashes. Rabbits and fowl on isolated occasions might be eaten raw, as when long rain had soaked all available wood thus making it impossible to kindle fire. An informant offered two recipes for "ice cream." The first variety consisted of a mixture of grease, cranberries, and snow. In the second process cranberries or dry soap berries were added to bear or beaver grease in a kettle and the whole mixed together. Snow did not enter the compound but today sugar makes a necessary additional ingredient. 252 [345]

Women preserved a variety of meats, fish, and berries through sun drying. Pemmican, prepared from stone-pounded meat with grease and berries added, was stored in viscera and birch-bark baskets. Caches held the preserved food. A simple type of cache consisted of a 12-foot pole lashed onto a tree with willow-bark line. After wrapping the meat in hide or a sheet of bark, it was suspended about three-quarters of the way up the pole. A ground cache consisted of a box-like structure of poles surrounded with rocks and covered with poles weighed down by additional stones. Men also constructed four-pole shelter caches and elevated them up to 12 feet above the ground, the poles being lashed together with babiche. A double layer of poles, one running at right angles 251 417

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Tsalona
Frances Lake

animals eaten included the muskrat, lynx, rabbit, ground hog, marten, and body louse. Ground hog, the informant pointed out, furnished a far more important source of food in the aboriginal period than did the rabbit. Women preserved a large number of ground hog from the fall for winter consumption. The fox and weasel were trapped for fur alone, while the skunk remained severely left alone. Birds caught for food included the owl, goose, duck, grouse, ptarmigan, swan, crane, and spruce hen. The eagle, crow, hawk, and loon played no role in the diet. Any successful hunter of large game, after butchering his prize, returned to camp and announced his good fortune, thus stimulating men and women to set out to secure a share of the meat. In general, butchering involved first the removal of an animal's skin, severing the limbs, and removing the viscera. The carcass could then be divided further.

Techniques of fishing included spearing with bone-pointed spears (the bone coming from the ankle of a moose), angling with bone points bearing moose-meat bait, and trapping with a fish weir. In winter weirs could be set in fast creeks that never froze; there were undoubtedly a number of such creeks on the Rocky Mountain slopes in the Tselona country. People did not fish with the aid of torches nor did they employ snares. Fish eaten included the grayling, sucker, ling (loche), whitefish, and trout. Salmon did not extend into this region.

Only when fire could not be provided did the Indians venture to consume raw meat. Hot-stone boiling in bark vessels served as the standard procedure for preparing flesh food. Pit cooking as well as stomach boiling were both denied. Blood went into the preparation of soup as did additional rendered grease. Although occasionally fixed by boiling, foetal animals were generally broiled, always in their entirety without the viscera being removed. A hunter did not neglect the opportunity to drink raw milk when he had slain an animal with full mammary glands.

As elsewhere in the northern forest the group recognized late September and October as a period suitable for meat drying. Now smudge fires could be neglecting without risking the danger of blow flies spoiling the food. For preservation women cut the meat of large game animals into long thin slices but ground hogs, minus the viscera, were dried in their entirety. Berries dried as they lay spread on a flat surface and, like other dehydrated foods, might be freshened again by soaking them in water. Skin bags contained pemmican, made of chopped meat and grease and without berries. The informant denied that viscera had ever been stuffed.

An entire family ate together, taking food from birch bark dishes. (Spruce bark was avoided because it imparted a pitchy taste to the food.) Periods of starvation visited the community not infrequently and sometimes resulted from caches ransacked by grizzly bears or other animal marauders. Only by quickly locating a well-stocked source of fish could famine be avoided. Cannibalism sometimes made an appearance in periods of starvation. The sight of much food promoted the tendency to overeat, especially following a period of limited rations. At such a time friends advised a hungry man to resume eating with caution, first offering him moose blood and pointing out that death might ensue if he ate meat straight off.

Frances Lake Kaska. No data on the food quest were sought from Frances Lake in-

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

clear at this point whether the informant meant to describe an ideal or manifest pattern. The murderer's escape from the area brought about an at least temporary halt in proceedings. Instead of seeking retaliation the family of the slain man might, through a kindly disposed headman, press for the adoption of the murderer in place of the victim. This may have occurred when the two were both young and of about the same age. The murderer's family always put pressure upon its member to accede to such a request. He then grew up as the son in the other family, and appropriate kinship terms defined his position (X). No punishment existed for attempted suicide. Cannibalism, a practice apparently regarded as habit-forming, earned banishment and, as a further consequence, death by starvation. People were dissuaded from sorcery by the logical argument that the deed would result in insanity. Interpersonal punishment for sorcery was not mentioned by informants. Similar magical retaliation followed incest, but public opinion dealt very harshly with those members of the community who committed incestuous offenses. Overwhelmed by shame and guilt in such circumstances, an unhappy man might tear off his penis or leap into the fire. Most grievous of all was incest between brother and sister.

A brother wanted his married sister but couldn't get her. He went one day to hunt beaver with the girl's husband. This man had a premonition that he was going to be attacked and the sister dreamed of her brother assaulting her husband. The brother succeeded in wounding his brother-in-law after which he returned to the dwelling with a beaver. The girl refused to eat the meat until her husband would return. When he didn't come back soon, she started out to look for him. She found him lying wounded at the beaver house. After treating his wounds she asked him to kill her brother, which he did.

An unwed mother felt ashamed when she brought forth a child. Sometimes, especially in summer, the community further punished the offense by forcing the girl into a month's exile, during which she subsisted mainly by clubbing porcupines. People intended the punishment to teach her sense and prevent repetition of such behavior. If they knew the baby's father, pressure might be placed on him to marry the mother. Such a marriage would not long endure, it was believed, because a girl who became impregnated outside of marriage was too wild to make a good wife. The lover might also give a small gift to the girl's father, thus acknowledging his offense. An illegitimate baby was fairly well treated if it survived the mother's banishment.[37] People recalled its status, however, and in later years a man might be taunted with the appelation xiina ("slave"). Such jeers rankled and sometimes led a man to fight his detractors.

An unfaithful wife and her paramour ideally shared in the condemnation of adultery. Generally, direct punishment fell on the woman alone. In the presence of an economy that forced men to leave their wives in camp while they hunted, plenty of opportunity for adultery existed. Chronic jealousy and suspicion haunted husbands. Returning to camp some men closely inspected the spruce brush in the dwelling. Should they find it "tipped over" or upset, evidence of the woman's unfaithfulness was presumed. Punishment for adultery consisted in beating the guilty wife or divorcing her, with resultant

[37] Among the Tlingit the killing of an illegitimate baby by stuffing its mouth with moss or grass had magical repercussions. If neglected "very bad luck will follow the family, or clan." Jones, *Study of the Tlingets of Alaska* (1914), 45.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Upper Liard

enemies were encountered and continued until one or the other side weakened to the point where it sued for peace or fled. Men were not spared for capture. As victims fell warriors wielding stone knives detached scalps by cutting above the ears and along the brow. Then the hair was seized and the scalp torn free from the flesh. Decapitation was not practiced.[26] To sue for an armistice one side might raise a slab of wood on which were painted figures of animals and fish. Lasting peace was promised when an enemy surrendered or when all potential avengers were killed. However fear and mistrust often prevented both sides from immediately negotiating friendly relations on a verbal basis. When peace negotiations were conducted on the spot, the victors usually demanded a number of women by way of indemnity. Unwilling as the latter might be, they were always forced to go. At other times fighting lasted until the enemy had lost many men or had been completely routed. The victors then displayed an orgy of sadism and hate. The bodies of the dead received obscene treatment, a woman's legs being spread apart to expose her naked genitals. Necrophilia, however, was never practiced. Live children were spiked on sharp stakes set around a fire. Live men might be suspended from trees by the feet, a separate line securing each limb. A heavy pole would then be dropped into the crotch of the helpless victim. Neither side troubled to dispose of the dead. Ceremonial cannibalism also followed fighting, but instead of flesh only the raw "belly fat" was eaten. This ritual meal strengthened the victors and enabled them, should necessity demand, to eat raw meat in the future. Young men serving the expedition as porters did not join in the rite.[27] Instead of partaking in the cannibalistic meal a man could fast for four days, eating only a very little food and drinking small quantities of water. Women and children formed the bulk of the prisoners. Mostly the children were killed during the homeward journey, the custom being to strangle or knife one child at each camp made by the returning expedition. Each night a moiety took its turn in executing a child. In winter, for every youngster killed a marker of spruce brush was thrust into the ice at the center of some lake where the group happened to be camping. Still other young prisoners might be killed after the expedition had returned to camp. Women captives became wives who initially had to be carefully watched or tied lest they seek to escape.[28] If any men had been taken they were permitted to marry daughters of the captors. Upon begetting a child the man received his freedom. Exchange of prisoners was unknown. Following a battle every man who had shed enemy blood ritually tore his sleeve. "To kill a man puts human blood in the killer's sleeve," the informant explained metaphorically. Such blood now received the opportunity of flowing out. (A man performed the same rite when his brothers first killed game.[29]) The victors "did

[26] Heads were taken by the Tlingit and scalped as the expedition neared home "unless they had had time to do so on the spot." Scalping is specifically stated to have been done in such a way as to exclude the ears. Swanton, *Social Condition, Beliefs and Linguistic Relationship of the Tlingit Indians* (1908), 450.

[27] A similar custom is restricted to novices among the Kutchin with the intention of preventing "a sickness which inevitably follows a first killing, as well as general bad luck." Osgood, *Contributions to the Ethnography of the Kutchin* (1936), 87.

[28] For the distribution of captive women within the community see below, p. 131.

[29] See below, p. 110.

6: Honigmann E-5 (1943-1945)1954 ND12 Nahane ND12
Dease River

from beating to killing. Injuries inflicted in quarrels demanded settlement by payment. To avoid blood vengeance in the event of murder the murder's family might accumulate many valuables, like skins, robes, and clothing, for presentation to the victim's kin. Even intertribal wars with the Tahltan could sometimes be avoided by offering valuables. A cannibal found himself banished from the community for as long as two years. Ostracism also greeted a couple guilty of incest, an offense covering sexual relations between members of a common moiety. Magical retribution further promised to hasten the death of such people.[42] A folk tale explains that men were likely to find their sisters sexually attractive because of an incident that had occurred very long ago. There once lived a man who left his two wives (they were sisters) and his children, killed his brother-in-law, and copulated with his widowed sister. The deserted wives killed the incestuous couple with the approval of the husband's brother, who said, "My brother did evil and acted like a dog."[43] An adulterous wife suffered a beating but a man had to be careful not to inflict serious injury or his behavior would constitute a crime punishable by the parents-in-law, who might demand an indemnity. A woman could divorce a philandering husband. The extent to which marital jealousy was developed is suggested in the tale of "The Deserted Woman."[43] A woman became suspected of infidelity because she offered her husband grease that she had found. The man, believing that the grease represented payment from a lover, burned his wife's clothing and tools and deserted her, expecting that she would die of cold and starvation. She managed to survive until two brothers discovered and married her. Subsequently she refused to return to her cruel husband. Illegitimacy disgraced both a mother and, later, the child.

Intergroup attitudes are reflected in the Nakani fear. The term designates a "bad Indian," who is given to lurking in the bush as he waits for an opportunity to steal girls. Victims of such an attack were never recovered but were taken to the abductor's tribe to become his wives. Dease River informants asserted as confidently as upper Liard River speakers that a Nakani represented a flesh and blood Indian rather than a supernatural being. The chronic insecurity marking intertribal relations sometimes exploded into war, resentment over encroachment of territories by foreigners being a common motive for fighting.[44] Many engagements were recalled between the Kaska and Tahltan. Ideally the fighting began when an enemy party raided a Kaska encampment, stealing women and killing the men. Inevitably relatives or friends discovered the crime and

[42] George Adsit reported that the Tahltan punished incest by death. On one occasion a guilty couple fled from their band and ascended a small salmon creek. Here, surrounded by an abundance of food, they raised two children before their people discovered them and killed the whole family.

[43] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 459–460.

[43] Teit, *Kaska Tales* (1917), 455–457.

[44] Morice speaks of feuds over hunting grounds dividing the Tahltan and Kaska. (Morice, *Nahane and Their Language* [1900–1903], 520.) The entry of white trappers into the Cassiar also met with resentment. "The Casca Indians have the greatest objection to white men trapping on their own account in their country; gold dust they can take as much as they like, but the fur is the Indian's equivalent for gold and must be left for the Indian. They are very firm on this point—so much so that a couple of white men who were trapping on the Liard some years ago were killed by the Indians because they refused to let the fur alone." Pike, *Through the Subarctic Forest* (1898), 112.